

Having described the invention, the following is claimed:

1. An apparatus comprising:

a depressible member having an unactuated condition and an actuated condition;

a first membrane connected with said depressible member, said first membrane resisting movement of said depressible member from said unactuated condition to said actuated condition, said first membrane further providing an increasing return force urging said depressible member to said unactuated condition as an operator moves said depressible member from said unactuated condition to said actuated condition; and

a second membrane resisting movement of said depressible member to said actuated condition, said second membrane further providing an increasing return force to said depressible member as the operator moves said depressible member to said actuated condition;

said first membrane initially acting alone and then acting simultaneously with said second membrane and providing a tactile sensation to the operator due to a reduction in the combined return forces applied to said depressible member by the first and second membranes.

2. The apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said first and second membranes are configured to have a concave surface facing away from said depressible member in said unactuated condition.

3. The apparatus as defined in claim 1 further including a third membrane enclosing said first and said second membranes.

4. The apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said first membrane has a first end fixed to a lower surface of said depressible member and a second end, opposite said first end, sliding along a planar surface as said depressible member moves from said unactuated condition to said actuated condition.

5. The apparatus as defined in claim 1 further including an electrical switch contact adjacent said second membrane.

6. The apparatus as defined in claim 6 wherein said second membrane is at least partially metal and engages said electrical switch contact to complete a circuit.

7. The apparatus as defined in claim 4 wherein said second end of said first membrane slides in a direction transverse to the direction of movement of said depressible member.

RECEIVED - 1964